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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT TUESDAY, November 7, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Questions and Answers." Information from the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils and the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Let's open up the mailbox this morning and see what questions are there waiting for answers. Here's one on top with a New York State postmark. This first letter says: "The inside of my tea kettle is lined with some dark crust or scale which, I'm told, comes from the lime in the water. Can you tell me how to remove this material?"

The specialists at the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils are the ones to answer that question. And here's what they have to say. They say that such a thick crust comes where certain mineral salts in the hard water precipitate during boiling. These are principally lime salts or magnesium salts. Tea kettles sometimes have a deposit as thick as an eighth or a quarter of an inch. Naturally this means a waste of fuel, as heat takes a good deal longer to get through the crust. The best way to prevent a deposit like this from forming is to look after your tea kettle as you would any other utensil--that is, wash and scour it. Do that every week, if necessary.

But if the deposit is already formed, you can choose one of two methods for removing it. The first method is to heat vinegar and water together in the kettle, or to heat a very small amount of hydrochloric acid in water in the kettle. If the mixture bubbles as it heats, you'll know that the deposit is gradually softening and you'll soon be able to scrape it out. Sometimes the acid has no effect on the mineral deposit. Then, the thing to do is to set the kettle dry over a flame. When it is hot, pour in a little cold water but be careful not to get scalded by the steam as you do this. The cold water will often cause the scale to crack so that you can easily remove it. But, of course, you must take care not to heat the kettle too hot. Cold water poured on aluminum that is too hot may warp the kettle.

As the old saying goes, an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure. The best way is not to allow the scale to form.

Well, well. Letter number two in our mailbox, also comes from New York State. This is from a lady who wants a receipt from that very good and very inexpensive baked cornmeal pudding, called Indian pudding. I'm delighted to give this recipe. It's good cold weather dish--hot, nourishing, spicy flavor. When you're using the oven for something else is a good time to bake this dessert. Are you ready with your pencil? Well, then, here are the five ingredients for Indian pudding:

1 quart of milk 1 teaspoon of salt
1/2 cup of yellow cornmeal 1/2 cup of molasses, and
1/2 teaspoon of ginger

Shall I read them again while you check? (Repeat) All right? Now for the directions. First, get out your double boiler. Then put the milk, the cornmeal and the salt in this double boiler to cook for twenty minutes, then add the molasses and ginger. Then, grease a baking dish and pour the mixture in. Bake in a very moderate oven (about 300 degrees F.) for about two hours. Serve hot with cream. Or serve hot with vanilla ice cream. Or chill, and serve cold with whipped cream.

Question number three comes from Ohio. This is about acid-forming and alkaline-forming foods. The lady who writes this letter says: "I have heard that fruits--sour fruits like oranges, apples and so on--are alkaline in the body. Can this be true when these foods taste acid?"

Yes, the nutritionists tell me this is true, strange as it may seem. But I don't believe you want me to go into all the complicated ins and outs of chemistry to explain why. I'm in favor of taking the facts on faith from the scientists. They say that appearances are deceiving in certain foods, for the sourest of all fruits--the lemon--has a strongly alkaline reaction in the body. Most other fruits are acid to taste, yet they also have an alkaline effect when you eat them. You can stack the foods you eat in two groups: The alkaline-forming group and the acid-forming group. Most fruits belong in the alkaline-forming group. But that rule has a few exceptions. For example, cranberries have an acid reaction. So do some prunes and plums.

Vegetables? Well, most of those also go in the alkaline group. The exceptions are sweet corn and lentils. A third and very important alkaline food is milk.

Now, over on the other side of the fence, you have the acid group. There you'll find meat and fish and eggs. Bread goes there, too--bread and other cereal foods.

That's the set-up, but the nutritionists say that most of us who have normal, well-balanced meals with a large variety of foods don't need to worry about this acid and alkaline business. It's interesting to know the facts, but they don't need to bother us. A normal diet contains both kinds of food and a normal body just uses what it needs of each and discards the rest. So you see, our everyday meals, made up of meat or fish or eggs, and bread and cereals, in one group, and fruits and vegetables and milk, in the other, balance themselves very nicely, thank you.

Tomorrow, we're going to talk about sauerkraut--making it and different ways to serve it.